

FOCAHONTAS COUNTY

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CHAPTER 4- Sec. 4- part a- ques. 5

THE HILLSBORO COMMUNITY.

The town of Hillsboro is located in a rich and beautiful valley. It is two and one-half miles from the nearest railroad station called Seebert, and named in honor of a family by that name that settled here in the wilderness in the early days. Hillsboro was named for Richard Hill, the pioneer from North Carolina, who built his home on a good farm in the neighborhood of Lobelia. His house was an unusually good one for that age. It was built of hewed logs, and the space between the logs was filled with mortar or mud and then whitewashed. It had three porches, two tall chimneys, and eight rooms. Hills Creek was named for Mr. Hill and because of his sterling worth, will sing of his glory as long as its waters flow. The creek flows through a narrow channel which increases its velocity until it plunges over a precipice sixty or more feet and creating the falls of Hills Creek.

Bruffey's Creek named after the first settler, John Bruffey, son of Patrick Bruffey, the pioneer, a revolutionary soldier under General Wayne, unites in time to flood with Hills Creek where their waters sink under Droop Mountain to appear again in the lower end of the Little Levels. Hills Creek forms Locust Creek and empties into the Greenbrier River. Many of the numerous progeny of Richard Hill founded their homes in the Hillsboro Community.

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The majority of the people of the Hillsboro Community are of the Scotch-Irish descent, their chief pursuits being agriculture and stock raising. Many fine herds of cattle and sheep, from time immemorial, have been prepared for the eastern markets and at the present time the farmers are becoming aroused to the importance of pure bred stock.

Hillsboro has always been a religious and educational center. In extracts from the journal of Rev. Francis Asbury we find that in the years 1788, 1790 and 1796, he made three evangelistic tours through this section of the country coming up through Greenbrier County each time and being entertained and preaching at the home of McNeel in the Little Levels, going from there to the Drinnom home in the Edray neighborhood. His course led from there to Cloverlick down through Tygarts Valley in Randolph County enroute to Morgantown. At the McNeel home lively religious discussions were indulged in by the whole community.

Oak Grove Presbyterian Church was organized in the year 1793. The early records of the church were lost and no one remembers when it was built. A substantial brick structure was later built southeast of Hillsboro, where the cemetery is still kept up. The most distinguished ministers who served this church from 1820 to 1872 were Rev. Joseph Brown, Rev. Wm. G. Campbell, Rev. John S. Blain, Rev. Mitchell D. Dunlap, and Rev. D. S. Sydenstricker.

The new church, a frame building, was built in the town of Hillsboro, where the present church is now located, in the early ministry of Dr. D. S. Sydenstricker. He was

succeeded by Rev. J. C. Johnson. The frame church was torn down in 1910 and a new church was built. A new brick church now occupies the site and bears the name "Oak Grove Church" in memory of the pioneer church although surrounded by a maple grove.

In the early part of the eighteenth century a very important educational work flourished in what was then the village of Hillsboro. Under the supervision of Rev. Jos. Brown the brick Academy was built and contained one large central room and two wings. The name of Hillsboro was abandoned in deference to that of "Academy", so strong was the school's influence on the minds and hearts of the people. In recent years the old name Hillsboro has been restored to the town.

M. A. Dunlap of Poca City, Oklahoma, remembering conversations heard in the home of his uncle Rev. M. D. Dunlap, thinks the first teacher ever in the Hillsboro Community was a man by the name of Keenan, who taught more than a hundred years ago. This teacher was considered a very learned man from the fact that he could read and write, and had figured in the arithmetic as far as the rule of three. The next teacher was the Rev. John S. Blain, a Presbyterian preacher, a teacher, and a physician. Next came Rev. Joseph Brown whose gentle Christian spirit greatly endeared him to the people. It is thought that as he was instrumental in building the new brick building that he was the first teacher within its walls. Rev. M. D. Dunlap succeeded him and taught from 1835 to 1845. His school had a wide reputation among

his pupils and enjoyed the patronage of the Lewises and Irwins of Kanawha County. They were also pupils from Fayette, Greenbrier, Monroe, Bath, and Highland Counties. He taught throughout the entire year and sought the aid of the more advanced pupils, notably, Rev. Wm. T. Price and Rev. James Haines.

Mr. Kelso of Pennsylvania, and Miss Priscilla Ramsey of Augusta County, Virginia, taught one session, and after the close of school were married, and went to western Pennsylvania to conduct a boarding school. Rev. Daniel A. Penick filled the position of teacher one year, boarded at Colonel Paul McNeel's, and the following autumn married the latter's eldest daughter. Rev. Emerson taught two sessions, boarded at Colonel McNeel's and made a compass that ran a perfect line from the McNeel gate to the Academy. Miss May Sprinkle taught in the home of Colonel McNeel the first year of the Civil War and was betrothed to John Burgess the first man from this community to be killed by the Northern soldiers in their initial raid through this country.

From the foregoing, it is easy to understand why so many notable people came from this fine institution of learning. The lives of Mr. Harmanus Stulting and family deserve special mention. They were natives of Holland, and to escape religious persecution, came to this country when it was in its infancy. They were valuable additions to the social life of the community and through their piety accomplished much good in this land of their adoption. Mr. Cornelius

stulting, eldest son in the family, was a fine teacher for many years, and died not so many years ago. Mrs. Carrie Stulting Sydenstricker, a daughter of the family, gave her life as a missionary in China, being sent as a member of the Oak Grove Church. She was the wife of the missionary, Andrew Sydenstricker and the mother of the famous novelist, Pearl Buck.

The first permanent settler in the Hillsboro community was John McNeel of Frederick County, Virginia. He came here in the year 1765.

John McNeel built the White Pole Church on the hill set apart for the McNeel cemetery, the first church in the community.

In the northern section of the Hillsboro community we have Mill Point, a small industrial village, including within its limits proper a store, a blacksmith shop, two flour mills, and three homes. Just above the village is a wonderful spring. The spring gushes forth so abundantly that it forms a miniture cataract. The water is so pure and cold that it is called the Blue Spring. There is a tradition that herds of buffalo formerly gathered in the valley facing the spring and drank from this water, and that it was from the stamping of the buffalo that "Stamping Creek" derived its name. Two of the tribes of Indians that frequented this region were the Ottawas and the Shawnees. Pontiac and Cornstalk were among their leaders. The death of the Bridger boys is the most dramatic story of Indian cruelty we know of in connection with the Mill Point fort.

The people who live in the Hillshore Community are:
the Michaels, Seards, Elmer, Morrisons, Clendenens, Bruffays,
Wills, Moores, Plattens, Goldridges, Barbers, Kinnisons, Wades,
Levians, McCarty, McCarty, Collins, Sealeys, Buckmans, Mc-
Laughlins, and others.

Mr. Mary Isabella Wallace

The town of Millikern is located in a rich and fertile valley. It is two and one-half miles from the nearest railroad station called Sechart and named in honor of a family by the name which settled there in the wilderness in the early days. Millikern is at the foot of the hill, the highest from which the valley can be seen. In the neighborhood of Lohelle. His house was an excellent one and was built in 1840. John Harty, the farmer, told that the Indians did not believe in the fine display of the town of Mr. Hill that they called his the Miller's Milling.

The house was built of hewn logs, and the space between was filled with mortar or mud, and then whitewashed. It had three porches, two tall chimneys and eight rooms. Mills Creek was named for Mr. Hill, and, because of his sterling worth, "will sing his requiem as long as its waters flow". The creek flows through a narrow channel which increases its velocity until it plunges over a precipice more than sixty feet high, forming a perfect spray and creating the beautiful Falls of Mills Creek.

Bruffeys Creek, named after the first settler, John Bruffey the pioneer, Revolutionary soldier under General Wayne, unites in time of flood with Mills Creek where their waters sink under deep woods, to appear again in the lower end of the little levels. Mills Creek flows into the river and the river flows into the ocean. Bruffeys Creek flows into the river, and after flowing for two miles, empties into the blue hole. One of the numerous tragedies of Richard Hill was the loss of his home in the Millikern valley.

The majority of the people of Millikern are of Scotch Irish descent, their chief pursuits being agriculture and stock raising. Many fine herds of cattle and sheep, from time immemorial, have been reared for the eastern markets, and at the present time the stimulus of our country agent, Mr. E. C. Wallace, the farmer, the stock raiser, is to the importance of purebred stock.

As the traveler ascends by a steep ascent to the summit of Droop Mountain he beholds a panorama of unsurpassed loveliness when the sun pours his effulgent warmth and brightness over mountains, plains, valleys and hills as they unite in proclaiming "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." He also beholds historic ground, for it was at the foot of Droop Mountain where General Averill with 5000 men pitched their tents before the battle of Droop Mountain which began on November 6, 1862.

Hillsboro has always been a religious and educational center. John Jordan of Pioneer fame, gave a building site to the Methodist church, which was destroyed by fire. They have since built four other churches in the community and now worship in a very comfortable, commodious building in the town of Hillsboro. In extracts from the journal of Rev. Francis Asbury, we find that in the years 1790, 1790 and 1790 he made three evangelistic tours through this section of the country, coming up through Greenbrier County, each time and being entertained and preaching at the home of McNeel in the Little Levels, going from there to the Drinnen home where he was received so "gladly" and entertained so "kindly" in the Edray neighborhood. His course led from there to Cloverlick, down through Tygarts Valley in Randolph County enroute to Morgantown. At the McNeel home lively religious discussions were indulged in by the whole community.

Oak Grove Presbyterian Church was organized in the year 1793. The early records of the Church were lost and no one remembers when it was built. A substantial brick structure in which this sect worshiped for many years was later built south east of Hillsboro, where the cemetery is still kept up. In 1830 the church was re-organized and Josiah Beard, Davis Poague, and John Jordan were elected elders. The most distinguished ministers who served this church from 1830 to 1892 were Rev. George Brown, Rev. Wm. C. Campbell, Rev. John S. Klein, Rev. Samuel L. Loring and Rev. D. S. Sydenstricker.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the village of Hillsboro was a flourishing one. It was the village of Hillsboro. Under the supervision of Rev.

The first Academy, the building was constructed and large numbers of people attended. The name of Hillboro was prominent in the minds of "Academy" at the time and the impression of the schools' influence on the mind and heart of the people. In recent years the old name of Hillboro has been restored to the town.

W. A. Dunlap, of Ponca City, Oklahoma, has contributed some recollections of late better days from his remarkable memory of conversations heard in the home of his uncle, Rev. W. A. Dunlap. He thinks the first teacher ever in Hillboro community was a man by the name of Keenan who taught more than a hundred years ago. This teacher was considered a very learned man from the fact that he could read and write and had figured in the arithmetic as far as the rule of three.

The next teacher was Rev. John S. Blain, a Presbyterian preacher, a teacher, and a physician. He is described as a large, lean, strong man, possessed of a kindly face and gentle heart. The description is somewhat contradictory as he is said to have whipped 13 boys the second day of school, 21 the third day, and five or six each day for about a week. After that no further trouble was experienced. At the school had an unsavory reputation that had to be disciplined and he used the means within his power. The wife of Dr. Blain was a Miss MacRoberts, sister of Archibald MacRoberts, who made his home with them, told that panthers would sometimes enter their spring house and drink their milk. Mrs. MacRoberts, whose father was Randolph, of Roscoe, and a descendant of Pocahontas, was the next teacher. He was well educated and a man of great talents that he used only under compulsion. He was a Whig, and in a campaign then being conducted between a Whig and a Democrat, in which the Whig was defeated in the argument, Mr. MacRoberts became so disgusted that he followed them to the next appointment and so completely routed the Democrat that he made it swift to steer clear of his antagonist.

The next teacher was Rev. Joseph Brown, whose gentle Christian character -----? to the people; and it is to be taken for granted that as he was instrumental in the building of the Brick Academy, he must have been the first teacher within its walls. Rev. W. A. Dunlap succeeded as the next teacher to him. His name had a wide reputation among his pupils and among the people of the Indian and

He was a member of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Loudoun, Virginia, and the Board of Supervisors of the County of Loudoun, Virginia, and the Board of Supervisors of the County of Loudoun, Virginia. He taught throughout the entire year and sought the help of the more advanced pupils, notably, Rev. Wm. F. Irwin and Rev. James H. Hays. It was his opinion that about eighty pupils were as many as one man could handle.

Pioneers. The first permanent settler in the wilderness of the Billabero community was John McGeel, of Frederick County, Virginia. He was of a pusillitic temperament and in the fear that he had slain his antagonist, fled from his native land and became a fugitive who followed the trend of the Alleghenies. After spending sometime in their gloomy depths he emerged into this section of the country and was so favorably impressed with the fertile land, fine timber and the general outlook of a goodly place to dwell, that he cast his tent on the gentle slope between where are now the camp at the head and the latter John McGeel residence. He camped here in the year 1758. After he began to occupy his tent steps were heard circling the camp

Just above the village a beautiful and picturesque spring is found tucked away in a sheltered nook among the lovely foothills that dip their feet into the laughing waters of Stampung creek, informing each other that the Indians were aroused and that they must flee.

(In the preparation of this article the writer is greatly indebted to Dr. W. S. Irvine's History of Pocahontas County, West Virginia, Border Warfare, as well as to friends and neighbors).

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